



*Always Ready
Always There*

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Getting to know your Guardsman; Andrew Enriquez

By Maj. Chris Borders

You may want to get his autograph now because Idaho Army National Guard Sgt. Andrew Enriquez auditions for the 2015 U.S. Army Soldier Show Feb. 7 through 13.

Enriquez, a 35P in A Co. of the 116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion is a cryptologic linguist fluent in French and Chinese—just what you expect from someone from the small community of Athol, Idaho (population 689), right?

Enriquez is well rounded in his culture, and not just with regard to foreign language. He is a semi-professional classical ballet dancer, who intends to utilize his skills to land him a part in this year's show.

The U.S. Army Soldier Show is a 90-minute high-energy top '40s and classics show; similar to what you might see in theme parks or a Broadway road tour. Irving Berlin is the show's founder, which began during World War I. The show attempts to appeal to a majority of the armed forces community from new recruits to retired veterans by performing a wide range of genres.

This would not be Enriquez's first time in the show. "Although I'm not much of a singer, they *did* get me to sing, but my background is dance." Last time Enriquez auditioned with two classical ballet pieces but this year he intends to keep with the Broadway-influenced-style of the show with a more contemporary ballet piece called "Who Cares?" set to Gershwin. "It's a fun piece that's ballet technique but jazzy," Enriquez says.

Enriquez learned about the show while learning French at the Defense Language Institute. While attending the course, he was his company's representative of the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers Project; an MWR program. As the representative, his leadership encouraged him to recruit people into supporting an upcoming talent show offered to military personnel attending DLI. "Nobody in my company had signed up so to boost my company's numbers I went and signed myself up, thinking at the time I didn't



Pfc. Andrew Enriquez, Idaho Army National Guard, gets air during a dance move as Staff Sgt. La'Brenza McDonald, 291st Military Police Company, belts out 'Fuego' during the 2010 U.S. Army Soldier Show July 31, 2010, at Fort Sill's Sheridan Road Theater. (Army photo and caption by Monica Wood)

really want to be *that guy* who's like—'hey! I was a ballet dancer in the army!'—so I was a little dodgy and just signed up as a volunteer." However, the day of the auditions, the garrison Command Sgt. Maj., who happened to know about Enriquez's talent, called him out on the microphone- what choice did he have?

"I was a little concerned but thought 'here goes nothing.' So I stepped up to the microphone to make sure people understood what was about to happen. I think it was very unexpected for a lot of them. Many people were impressed; some people I imagine may have been wary. Generally people were mostly like, 'hmmm...'"

After the performance, a man with the Army Entertainment Division introduced himself and asked that Enriquez get in touch because he was interested in having him audition for the U.S. Army Soldier Show. And this ... is how it all began.

This year's theme is "for the Soldier by the Soldier" and it represents all service members from all branches. After auditions, they roll right into production.

If things go right, Enriquez will be released from the Idaho National Guard for 10 months; enough time to try out, tour and return home.

"This is one of the beauties of being in the National Guard. You have the ability to pursue personal *and* professional goals," Enriquez says.

The U.S. Army Soldiers Show tours all over the country May through September but unfortunately, the show will most likely not tour through Idaho. However, we will keep you posted on Andrew's status. Break a leg Andrew!

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